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Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

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Thursday, 11 November 2010, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Radmanović
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet
	Japan	Mr. Sumi
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Rugunda
	United States of America	Mrs. DiCarlo

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 8 November 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/575)

* Reissued for technical reasons on 8 December 2010.

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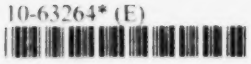

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 8 November 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/575)

The President: At the outset, I should like to acknowledge the presence of His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On behalf of the Security Council, I extend a warm welcome to Mr. Radmanović.

I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Croatia and Serbia, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Vilović (Croatia) and Mr. Starčević (Serbia) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Inzko to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of members of the Council to document S/2010/575, which contains a letter dated 8 November 2010 from the Secretary-General transmitting the thirty-eighth report of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Inzko: I thank the Council for giving me the opportunity today to present my fourth report as High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the thirty-eighth report altogether. I hope that my presentation will provide a better understanding of the overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where we stand now and what challenges we will face in the period ahead.

It is now exactly 15 years since the Peace Agreement ending the hostilities in Bosnia and Herzegovina was concluded in Dayton. Since that day, there has been significant progress in the country and Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership of and successful work in the Security Council is just one example of the many improvements that we have seen in the past 15 years.

In that respect, it is a great pleasure to have President Radmanović here, representing Bosnia and Herzegovina in this forum. Let me also take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Radmanović on his re-election to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and on assuming the Chairmanship of the Presidency yesterday.

Let me also congratulate every citizen in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the European Union (EU) decision earlier this week to allow visa-free travel for all Bosnians to all the Schengen countries of the European Union. That is a very significant decision, which shows the EU's commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's European future. But it also demonstrates that Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders can address difficult reform if they muster the necessary political will.

Moreover, the regional situation in the Western Balkans has continued to develop positively. In the summer, the Croatian and Serbian Presidents made ground-breaking visits to Bosnia and Herzegovina that underlined the need for reconciliation and regional cooperation. As recently as last week, Serbian

President Tadić apologized for Serbia's role in the 1991 Vukovar massacre. In a similar fashion, the new Bosniak member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, Bakir Izetbegović, offered his own apology to Serbia for the crimes committed against innocent civilians by the Bosnian army during the war. Those are positive acts and gestures of reconciliation, which have had a positive impact in the region and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, despite the improved atmosphere in the region, the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains complex. Today, 15 years after the signing of the Dayton Agreement, there is still insufficient dialogue and compromise. Sadly, nationalist agendas inside the country have continued to prevail over cooperation and compromise. The European Commission's progress report published just two days ago accordingly confirmed that Bosnia and Herzegovina is not living up to its potential and that in the past year the country has only made limited progress in addressing the conditions for European integration. Basically, there has been no progress on key reforms required for Euro-Atlantic integration in the past year.

Unfortunately, the developments of the past year are symptomatic of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the past four years. Whereas there was substantial progress in the first 11 years after the war, in the past four years there has been stagnation and time has been largely wasted. The fundamentals of the country and its institutions, including their constitutional framework, have been challenged on a regular basis. Let me give the Council some concrete examples.

First, there has been a fundamental change in the rhetoric and verbal attacks against the State. Leading politicians from Republika Srpska have frequently referred to the future independence of their entity while claiming that Bosnia and Herzegovina is an "impossible country", and therefore not sustainable. The same leaders have also repeatedly denied rulings by two international United Nations courts, the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, that genocide took place in Srebrenica, thus further increasing tensions. I want to underline that, despite that rhetoric, the Federation-based parties have stopped challenging the existence of Republika Srpska almost entirely. However, the leading Bosnian Croat party, the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina, has called for a separate Croat entity. That may not be realistic, but it is nevertheless unnecessarily increasing the tensions in the country.

Secondly, the State-level institutions have not worked to their full potential during the past four years, due mainly to political obstruction. In comparison with the previous State-level Parliament, in the period 2002 to 2006, the outgoing Parliament has adopted one third less legislation.

Thirdly, there has also been a marked increase in unilateral actions, with the entities adopting and implementing legislation with little regard for the State and/or the other entity. Republika Srpska in particular has adopted a number of laws that challenge European partnership priorities or that aim to dismantle State-level reforms. There have also been similar, but less frequent, developments in the Federation.

The problems to which I have referred have lead to a political stalemate and clear stagnation during the past four years. As a result, as confirmed by the European Commission's progress report, there has been only limited progress in addressing EU-related reforms. To name just two, in the past year State-level authorities have failed to address the December 2009 ruling of the European Court of Human Rights with regard to discrimination against some citizens in Bosnia and Herzegovina who are prevented from fully participating in public affairs and receiving appointments to certain State-level institutions.

Similarly, a State-level census law has not been adopted, as the political parties could not agree on the future implementation of the census results. It will now be up to the new legislature to deal with this issue. But it is unlikely that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to hold a State-level census in 2011 together with the other countries in the region and in the world.

Equally, there has been very little progress in implementing the objectives and conditions for the transition or the closure of the Office of the High Representative that have been determined by the Peace Implementation Council.

On the State property objective, there has actually been regression, as the Republika Srpska National Assembly adopted its own law on State property, which — if it enters into force — would register all State property in that entity to Republika Srpska. If the

law is formally enacted, it will make a comprehensive negotiated solution on State property impossible. Consequently, that would make the closure of the Office of the High Representative substantially more difficult.

Furthermore, similar to the situation with State property, there has been no progress in addressing the defence property objective since my last report. As a result, Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards NATO has stalled, as it has not been able to meet the conditions for implementing NATO's membership action plan. Equally, Republika Srpska authorities continue to fail to meet the outstanding requirement for the termination of the supervision of Brcko.

Due to the lack of progress, the Peace Implementation Council has not been able to decide about the closure of the Office of the High Representative, as already foreseen in 2006. The Peace Implementation Council will meet again later this month to consider the situation. In essence, however, the decision about the closure or transition of my Office depends on the readiness of Bosnian political leaders to meet the objectives and conditions that have been set.

Despite the increasingly difficult situation on the ground and despite the lack of progress in addressing the conditions for the closure of my Office, in July 2010 I unilaterally reduced my staff by over 20 per cent. When I arrived in Bosnia and Herzegovina last year, my Office still had 220 employees; now it has 160. Of course, many years ago, my Office had 800 employees. I also handed over the responsibility to vet certain appointed entity and cantonal officials to the respective local authorities, in a spirit of transition and more local ownership.

It was in that overall atmosphere that I have described that general elections were held last month. The international media portrayed those elections as a watershed event in the future of the country that will determine whether it will move forward towards Euro-Atlantic integration or backwards towards disintegration owing to increasing calls for secession coming from the smaller entity.

The Bosnian election authorities conducted those elections efficiently. International election-observation missions concluded that the elections were generally held in accordance with international standards. The turnout for the general elections was around 57 per cent, which is the highest turnout in any election since 2002. At the same time, if we compare this election with the elections in 2006, there was an 18 per cent increase in the number of voters. This is good news that shows citizens increasingly care about the future of their country.

At the same time, the elections were held on the basis of the current election law, which is not in line with the European Convention for Human Rights. This does not affect the legitimacy of the elections, but this problem must be addressed urgently after the formation of the new Government.

Let me underline that Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to become fully sustainable and to move forward towards Euro-Atlantic integration, will need political leaders that are ready to change the way they conduct politics. Zero-sum politics will need to be replaced by politics based on compromise and a readiness to meet each other half way. I cannot overemphasize this point. This is fundamental for a stable and forward-looking country. In this regard, the responsibility for what happens in the next four years is firmly in the hands of the incoming authorities. They have a choice to make and, when they make it, they must take responsibility for what follows.

The choice facing Bosnia and Herzegovina is not whether it survives as a State or whether it is divided. It will definitively continue to exist. The partition of the country or secession are not solutions. If it were possible to partition Bosnia and Herzegovina peacefully, it would have happened in 1992. It was, however, not possible then and it is not possible today. The partition of the country would also be a triumph for the Milošević-led policy of the past. Instead, the choice facing Bosnia and Herzegovina is whether it chooses to reintegrate and reform, and in so doing join the EU and NATO, or whether it chooses stagnation and isolation.

In light of the situation I have described, there is still a need for the international community to remain fully focused on Bosnia and Herzegovina. We must continue to accompany the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the Euro-Atlantic path, and the international community must make it clear to the incoming Governments what we expect from them in the period ahead. As a first step to recreating the momentum, we must urge politicians to form Governments at all levels that are focused on the

Euro-Atlantic agenda. However, Government formation — especially at the State-level — may take a long time, especially since some politicians have made clear their desire to roll back previously agreed reforms and to devolve a number of competencies from the State to the entities.

Furthermore, we must insist very vocally that Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity and constitutional framework be preserved. Unfortunately, this emphasis is still necessary. We must make clear that only Bosnia and Herzegovina as one country has a future in the EU and NATO and that rhetoric about Bosnia and Herzegovina being an impossible State must stop.

Beyond those basic issues, we need Bosnia and Herzegovina to progress with urgency towards both the European Union and NATO. This is in Bosnia and Herzegovina's interest as well as in the international community's interest. In this regard, we should strongly encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to address the main problems identified in the European Commission's progress report, such as the European Court of Human Rights ruling, the census law and other key European partnership priorities. We should encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to address the five objectives and two conditions that have been set for the transition and closure of the Office of the High Representative. Finally, we should encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to start a step-by-step process of constitutional changes in order to make a country that is self-sustainable and efficient in dealing with the challenges of Euro-Atlantic integration. We are speaking here not of the centralization of a State or the strengthening of centralized institutions; we are speaking here of strengthening the efficiency of State institutions.

In 10 days, we will mark the fifteenth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In this context, we need to ensure that we do not leave the job in Bosnia and Herzegovina unfinished. As I have argued before, the presence of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) with an executive mandate is still important. I must underline that it is important that sufficient troops be left on the ground to provide adequate levels of reassurance to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this respect, I strongly recommend the renewal of the Security Council resolution on EUFOR next week.

Our continued attention on Bosnia and Herzegovina is the way to get to the objective that we all want to reach, where Bosnia and Herzegovina can move towards full Euro-Atlantic integration under its own steam — and that means with full ownership and the full responsibilities that go along with it. I am truly convinced that this possibility can become a reality, and I will, as High Representative and also as the Special Representative of the EU, continue to dedicate all my efforts to assisting and supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts in this direction. I also count on the continued support of the Council in this regard.

The President: I thank Mr. Inzko for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to members of the Security Council.

Mr. Radmanović (*spoke in Bosnian; English interpretation provided by the delegation*): It is an honour to address the Security Council in the debate on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Today's debate will facilitate a better understanding of the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the progress the country has achieved in this last period.

Since the last report of the Secretary-General was issued (see S/2010/235), many things have occurred in Bosnia and Herzegovina that have changed the situation in the country. There are many different opinions and analyses among the political actors and citizens regarding the progress achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Until now, the Presidency has not had a unified position on this issue. Allow me, as the Chairman of the Presidency, to present the view agreed upon with the other two members of the Presidency on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with possible future developments.

Today, it is popular to talk about Bosnia and Herzegovina predominantly in gloomy terms, as was recently done in this Chamber. Bosnia and Herzegovina is the ideal arena in which to test various catastrophe theories. Unlike other, similar regions of the world in which the international community is engaged, Bosnia and Herzegovina on the whole represents a positive example of the peacebuilding efforts of the international community. This is confirmed by numerous reports of relevant international organizations, independent institutions and non-governmental organizations. To be honest, Bosnia and Herzegovina did experience a slight delay in its reform and transition process in the past six

months. One reason is that this was an election year in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the political entities were focused more on the election campaign and attracting voters than on the real problems of the country.

This year we mark the fifteenth anniversary of the signing the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Fifteen years ago, Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged from a tragic conflict that had destabilized the country and the entire region. Today, 15 years later, we wonder what and how much we have achieved of all that was signed and agreed. Let me say this: With the combined efforts of the international community and local authorities, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress in the post-war period, which is a positive example compared to many similar critical areas in the world. It would be difficult to find an example of a peace agreement in modern European or world history that was more rapidly and successfully implemented. Those who are dissatisfied with the pace of progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina are seeking a remedy by challenging the very foundations of the existing Peace Agreement, which will only lead us to new conflicts and disputes.

Since the end of the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina has implemented all key elements of the Dayton Peace Agreement. A stable peace has been established; the country has been functioning according to the constitutional grounds set out in the Dayton Peace Agreement; most refugees and displaced persons have recuperated their property and many have returned to their homes.

Consequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina is a success story compared to other territories in the region. Six general parliamentary elections have been held, the last few of which were completely organized by local authorities. Domestically, a single economic space has emerged. The macroeconomic indicators of the economy are stable, showing a slow but positive upward trend. A value-added tax has been successfully introduced. Reforms of the defence sector and the armed forces have been successfully implemented. Following the initial arrests of indicted war criminals by international military forces, most of the others have been arrested and extradited to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague by the local authorities. War crimes trials have been processed in the national courts.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has become a member of the Council of Europe and other international organizations, the country joined the NATO Partnership for Peace and became a member of the European Free Trade Association, leading to its signing a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union (EU). The country has fulfilled 174 requirements for a visa-free regime with the EU and a positive decision has already been made. Reforms are ongoing in public administration, justice, higher education, the public broadcasting system and the harmonization of the Constitution with the European Convention on Human Rights and the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

I recall that, as a result of the favourable development of the political and security situation in Bosnia, NATO has reduced its troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its presence to the headquarters in Sarajevo. The European Union Force has also reduced its forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a result of the apparent progress in achieving a secure and stable environment.

There are differing views in Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the role and future status of the Office of the High Representative. The political representatives of one people are of the opinion that the Office of the High Representative should permanently remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the representatives of the others believe that its closure is necessary and that its functions should be transferred to the EU Special Representative. While there may have been reasons after the war for the Office of the High Representative to exist, 15 years later they have been significantly reduced.

The latest report of the European Commission on Bosnia stated that Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot take further steps in the process of European integration until the transition of the Office of the High Representative to the Special Representative of the European Union is complete.

All the changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina must be based on the rule of law. The full implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement is therefore imperative. The Dayton accord is primarily an agreement, not a framework from which one can pick and choose only that which is agreeable while shirking one's other obligations. In regard to the decisions of the Office of the High Representative amending annex 4 of the

Accord, it is clear that legal agreements should be changed only in respect to the way they were adopted, if not otherwise agreed on. Discussions on these issues will therefore continue.

The problem of building a functional State cannot be solved merely by changing the constitutional and legal procedures for promulgating decisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, aimed at greater or lesser centralization or decentralization. This is a simplistic and dangerous solution to the country's complex and sensitive political problems. In a complex and multi-ethnic country like Bosnia and Herzegovina, such an approach would bring the Government's legitimacy into question and disturb a region that is still not fully stable.

National reconciliation and trust are basic prerequisites for building a functional State, and that cannot be achieved without prosecuting all war criminals of all nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Hague Tribunal has recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina's cooperation in this matter, rendering any other comments on it unnecessary.

There has been a lack of understanding of the problem of the return of refugees on the part of local politicians in Bosnia and Herzegovina and, partly, of the international community. In reality, no country in the world has done more for the return of refugees than Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sustainable returns of refugees remain a challenge, and in this area Bosnia and Herzegovina needs the support of the international community. In addition, the international community needs to deal with the fact that within 500 kilometres of the Western Balkans — encompassing Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina — legal standards on the right to return vary, resulting in further injustice for the refugee population.

Every country in the Western Balkans is currently progressing towards the status required for admission to the European Union, and while Bosnia and Herzegovina may lag behind its neighbours, it is not as far behind as some contend.

All of these are reasons for encouraging Bosnia and Herzegovina on its journey towards membership of the European Union, to which it rightfully belongs; towards the rapid transition of the Office of the High Representative; and towards enabling Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to negotiate and act in accordance with their agreements without external pressure. Agreement, understanding, equality and tolerance are the essence of all reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina and should be encouraged, commended and approved.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to welcome Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I would also like to welcome Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and Special Representative of the European Union for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank him for his report (see S/2010/575, annex).

Mexico commends Bosnia and Herzegovina's active participation as an elected member of the Security Council, demonstrating the progress that this country has made in recent years in a context that is not without its difficulties. Its progress in moving strategically closer to the European Union and in developing more flexible relations with its neighbours in a more cooperative atmosphere is an important step forward in consolidating Bosnia and Herzegovina's role on the international stage and in promoting regional stability.

My delegation believes that, in order to consolidate lasting peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the main political forces of the country must step up their dialogue and reach an understanding among themselves. We therefore welcome the fair and orderly holding of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 3 October. We are convinced that this is the path that must be taken.

We regret, however, the divisive rhetoric employed by one of the parties, which does not contribute to the creation of a political climate conducive to the process of internal integration, peacebuilding and reconciliation. Nor is it a promising sign for these efforts that there are those who seek to challenge the work and the authority of the High Representative and Special Representative of the European Union. The political actors involved must promote negotiation and conciliation as the only way to overcome differences constructively and to avoid confrontations that may endanger the country's stability and constitutional framework. There is no doubt that a Government of unity is the way to achieve national reconstruction and eventual integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.

I would like to stress the importance of the international community's ongoing support for the efforts of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen the rule of law. That is why we support the High Representative's recommendation that the presence of the European Union force in Bosnia and Herzegovina be maintained in 2011, given its relevant role in continuing to provide peace and security to the population through the support of the Office of the High Representative.

We believe that respect for and the strengthening of national justice institutions are fundamental elements of the fight against the impunity of those responsible for serious crimes committed in the past, and in order to promote national reconciliation and the rule of law. We welcome the adoption of the revised strategy for the implementation of annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, concerning the return of displaced persons and refugees. We are confident that this step will make an important contribution to the voluntary and sustainable return of the 113,000 people who remain internally displaced, more than 7,000 of whom are living in conditions of poverty.

We reiterate our call on the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the countries of the region to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, in order to allow it to effectively fulfil its mandate, particularly by contributing information to the open cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity that the Tribunal is currently investigating, with a view to serving justice and contributing to post-conflict reconciliation and stabilization efforts in the region.

In conclusion, we reiterate Mexico's support for the work of the High Representative, and we hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be able to overcome its differences once and for all and consolidate a democratic, multi-ethnic State in which its citizens, like all those of the Balkans region, will be able to enjoy a more stable and prosperous future as an integral part of Europe.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Radmanović. We listened attentively to his assessment of the situation in that country. We are grateful to the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Inzko, for presenting the report on developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/2010/575, annex).

As we see it, the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains complex, although we do not wish to overdramatize it. The general elections, a very important milestone for the country, were held in a calm and peaceful manner. There are no direct threats to the Dayton Peace Agreement. The viability of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State is reaffirmed by its election as a non-permanent member of the Security Council and by the successful work of its delegation in this principal organ of the United Nations.

In these circumstances, the further continuation of the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which enjoys extraordinary Bonn powers, no longer has meaning and has become counterproductive. Any unilateral step taken by the High Representative will only exacerbate the situation and provoke a response from the Bosnian sides.

The Bosnians' successful holding of elections in accordance with international standards, as confirmed by international observers, attests to the maturity of Bosnian statehood and the ability of its citizens to take decisions about the future of their country without external guardianship. The international community should work constructively with those leaders who were elected by the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including the Republika Srpska.

In our view, the main task of the international community in the post-election period is to transfer full responsibility for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Bosnians themselves. In practical terms, this means ensuring conditions conducive to transforming the Office of the High Representative into a mission of the European Union Special Representative. In the framework of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, we agreed on a road map to that end — the 5+2 formula. Following the formation of the structures of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entities, it is now necessary that we return to that task.

It is unacceptable to link the 5+2 formula to the achievement of objectives in the framework of the so-called Euro-Atlantic agenda for Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative spoke at great length — perhaps too great a length — of that today. It is especially unacceptable to link it to the achievement of constitutional reform, which would run counter to

the programme, collectively agreed upon by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, for closing the Office of the High Representative.

The lessons learned from the Butmir initiative demonstrate that the imposition from the outside of ready-made blueprints can only complicate dialogue among Bosnians and lead to an unjustified encouragement of one side. We believe that, with respect to an issue so fundamental to the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it will be possible to identify any corrective adjustment only with the consent of all three constituent peoples, as stipulated in the Dayton Peace Agreement.

We agree with the view that it would be advisable to begin without delay implementing the recommendations set forth in December 2009 by the European Court of Human Rights. They can and must be implemented on the basis of compromise among the Bosnian sides. We cannot endorse an expansive interpretation of the opinion of the European Court of Human Rights or attempts on that pretext to achieve a fundamental revision of the entire Dayton construction. Any step towards constitutional reform should be strictly within the Dayton legal framework.

Mr. Assaf (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to thank His Excellency Mr. Radmanović for his statement. We also thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his comprehensive briefing. We commend his efforts to promote the political process under the Dayton Peace Agreement.

We support the efforts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to complete the implementation of the Dayton accord and to achieve the goals of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, which will ultimately lead to the closure of the Office of the High Representative. We welcome the progress achieved by Bosnia and Herzegovina on several issues, in particular the stabilization of the security situation, the holding of free and fair elections in October, and the fulfilment of the European Union conditions concerning visa liberalization.

However, several daunting challenges remain. The pre-election circumstances overshadowed the situation and led to the interruption of important reforms. We regret the rhetoric used to attack the Dayton Peace Agreement and the sovereignty, legislation and competencies of the State in the course of the election. We therefore urge all parties concerned to reach a timely understanding on the formation of a progressive Government and to engage in open dialogue to achieve reconciliation and embark on the path of reform that will ensure real progress for all citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity.

It is imperative to create an environment conducive to achieving progress on many issues, particularly constitutional and economic reform, the resolution of issues concerning State property, particularly defence property, and the filling of key public positions. The sustainable return of refugees is vital to achieving lasting peace. We support the role of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in establishing justice in the region in order to avoid the recurrence of past tragedies.

We believe that the international community should continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its efforts to overcome its political difficulties and to strike a balance between centralization and decentralization. Fifteen years after the Dayton Peace Agreement, we cherish the hope that Bosnia and Herzegovina will make firm strides towards the prosperity and stability to which all its citizens aspire.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is generally calm. We welcome the smooth holding of the general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina in October and the progress made in security sector reform and the rule of law, as well as the steady economic improvements.

We also note, however, that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to face complex situations and difficulties on its path towards stability and development. China respects the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and all its ethnic communities in their independent choice of paths to development. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the hands of its peoples. The international community should respect their ownership and leadership.

We hope that all the ethnic communities of Bosnia and Herzegovina will focus their attention on the long-term interests of their State, effectively implement the Dayton Peace Agreement, actively pursue dialogue, enhance political trust, and promote national reconciliation. We look forward to the timely

formation of the new Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the completion of constitutional reform, economic recovery, the establishment of the rule of law and social development.

The maintenance of lasting peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Balkans is in the interests of all parties, and sustained dialogue and cooperation are the fundamental means to that end. We support the efforts of the international community to facilitate high-level political dialogue among the various actors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are pleased to note that the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, pursuant to his mandate under the Dayton Peace Agreement, has pursued his contacts with all political parties with a view to promoting unity and cooperation among all the communities of that country.

China welcomes the positive role played by the European Union in the framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement and supports the work of the Special Representative and the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR). We hope that EUFOR will increase its support for the capacity-building of the Bosnia and Herzegovina armed forces so that the country will be able to assume responsibility for maintaining its own State sovereignty, security and stability as soon as possible.

We welcome the help provided by the International Monetary Fund to Bosnia and Herzegovina to help maintain the country's financial and economic stability. China is ready to work together with the international community in continuing to provide Bosnia and Herzegovina with support to ensure lasting peace, stability and development.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): Let me begin by extending a warm welcome to President Radmanović and thanking him for his statement. I would also like to congratulate him, as well as Mr. Izetbegović and Mr. Komšić, for their elections as members of the Council of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the successful conduct of the elections.

We are also pleased to see High Representative Inzko among us again. I want to thank him for his tireless efforts and leadership and for his comprehensive report (see S/2010/575, annex) and the insightful briefing he provided today.

In a few days, we will celebrate the fifteenth anniversary of the signing of the Dayton of Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. These 15 years have certainly not been easy. But, despite the difficulties, there have been significant positive developments. We can definitely say that Bosnia and Herzegovina has proved itself to be viable as a State. As such, the presence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Security Council is a clear sign of the confidence that the international community has in the country.

In the same vein, we are pleased that the elections held on 3 October were successfully carried out and that they were characterized by international observers as being generally in accordance with international standards. We welcome the maturity displayed by all components of the country and we hope that a broad-based Government will be formed soon to tackle the many issues that lie ahead.

As a Balkan country itself, Turkey attaches great importance to achieving lasting peace and stability in the region. We consider a sovereign, democratic, stable and functional State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with its internationally recognized borders, as an indispensable prerequisite for achieving that objective. That is why, in addition to our excellent bilateral relations, as illustrated by the recent visits of our President and Minister for Foreign Affairs, as underlined once again in the report of the High Representative, Turkey continues to make every effort to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in its endeavours to promote regional cooperation. Indeed, regional ownership and inclusiveness should be a key element in our quest for peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In this context, the Turkish initiative to hold high-level trilateral meetings between Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia, as well as between Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, has surely contributed to the enhancement of regional understanding and collaboration. In that regard, we welcome the recent improvement in relations among the regional partners. The visit of the President of Serbia to Srebrenica, the decision of the Serbian Parliament on Srebrenica, the declaration by Mr. Izetbegović on crimes committed during the war and a similar declaration by President Tadić on Vukovar are positive steps towards regional reconciliation. We encourage these acts and gestures, which will promote regional cooperation and

contribute to improving the daily lives of the peoples of the region.

In the same vein, we welcome the decision of the European Union to liberalize the visa regime applied to the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe that this decision is yet another step that serves to keep alive Bosnia and Herzegovina's European perspective. Furthermore, Turkey supports and appreciates the efforts of the European Union to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina to take its rightful place in the European family of nations, including by providing stability through its Police Mission and Operation Althea.

As an active contributor to both of these missions, Turkey supports the extension of the executive mandate of the European Union-led peacekeeping force and remains ready to continue with its contributions. We believe that the future of the region is closely tied to that of Europe as a whole. We firmly support Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspirations to fully integrate into Euro-Atlantic institutions. We hope that those institutions will also embrace Bosnia and Herzegovina. We also hope that the internal difficulties impeding Bosnia and Herzegovina's effective cooperation with NATO will soon be resolved.

Having mentioned the internal difficulties, we cannot help but share the concerns of Mr. Inzko regarding several aspects of the domestic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in particular with respect to the continued anti-Dayton rhetoric and actions that challenge the sovereignty and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The lack of progress in the reforms necessary for the integration of the country into Euro-Atlantic institutions is a direct consequence of the divisions and negative stances in the internal political situation. I should say that this trend stands in clear contradiction to the improved regional atmosphere, and is thus all the more unnecessary and counterproductive. Unilateral actions not only complicate the functioning of the State, they also have adverse consequences for those who promote them, as they further delay the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

At this point, let me also underline that we firmly support the High Representative in using the powers granted to him to lead Bosnia and Herzegovina to a better future. As such, the challenges to the authority of the international community and that of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council are unacceptable.

Let me conclude by once saying that the past 15 years have clearly shown that Bosnia and Herzegovina is moving in the right direction. We support Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is up to Bosnians to make their country prosper and to undertake the necessary reforms to bring about a more viable State. As such, we want to see all parties embrace a common vision and act accordingly, rather than pursue narrow ethnic interests. We therefore support the democratic forces in the country and remain hopeful that the democratic ideals and aspirations of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina will eventually overcome the divisive tendencies.

On the other hand, we believe that the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina into Euro-Atlantic structures will eliminate any feelings of exclusion, instil confidence in the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina and ensure its future as a strong, stable, secure and whole European country. Turkey is fully committed to this objective. We will do everything possible to assist the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, without any distinction among them, to achieve their rightful place in the international community.

Mr. Briens (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank the High Representative for the briefing that he has just given us and to assure him of the support of France. I would also like to welcome Mr. Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A few days ago, the 27 Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the European Union decided to lift the short-stay visa obligation for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is significant progress — first of all, for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will now be able to travel more easily within Europe. But this also means progress for political leaders, who can see with this decision of the European Union the specific results of their efforts. This decision also shows to what extent the unity of the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina in working towards a shared objective can produce results. The European Union long ago specified the conditions that needed to be met and, indeed, once those conditions were met, the Union honoured its commitments.

However, we regret that progress expected in other areas has not been forthcoming. Thus, absent an agreement between the two entities dealing with the issue of the redistribution of defence property, the first annual programme of the plan of action for accession to NATO could not begin last September. Bosnia and Herzegovina will be given a new opportunity to launch that programme next September.

The High Representative has unfortunately referred to several difficulties and internal conflicts in his last report (See S/2010/575), and we can only subscribe to his analyses.

Gone is the time when the international community took decisions in place of the leaders of countries. Let us recall that, 10 years ago in Zagreb, the European Union sought a European perspective for all countries in the region. These prospects gradually took shape in stages, road maps and criteria. One by one, all countries of the region have seized this opportunity and is preparing, each at its own pace, to one day become a full member of the European family. The Sarajevo summit held in June confirmed the European Union's commitment to that process.

At the same time, the European Union is helping to stabilize Bosnia and Herzegovina with the European Union Force Althea. For 10 years, the international community has supported the Bosnian authorities and helped them to build institutions capable of running the country. Objectives and conditions have been laid out to provide for a transition that will allow the Bosnian authorities to decide their own future by themselves. The international community will remain present in the form of a strengthened Special Representative of the European Union who will replace the High Representative.

However, instead of taking advantage of these opportunities, the leaders of the country, in particular those of the Republika Srpska, as noted by Mr. Inzko in his briefing, have been amplifying their criticism of the international community that has steadfastly supported the country for so many years. With legislative elections approaching, recent months saw an increase in public statements around the country that are unacceptable in a country that is a member of this Council and would like to become a member of the European Union and NATO. We urge leaders to form a Government as soon as possible following the elections of 3 October. The electoral campaign should now come to a close and allow the work suspended for this period to continue.

We welcome actions undertaken recently in the region, such as the adoption by the Serbian Parliament last spring of a resolution condemning the Srebrenica massacre, showing that dialogue and reconciliation have their place in the Balkans and that the regional cooperation so dearly sought by the European Union is not in vain.

Once again, we call on the Bosnian leaders to put into practice these initiatives at the national level and finally to harness a positive momentum that would confirm the European perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The future of the country depends on its leaders, particularly those who have just received mandates from their citizens. Today, it is up to them to demonstrate courage and determination in solving their problems.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): Let me first warmly welcome High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, and thank him for the report (see S/2010/575, annex) and his work. We fully share his assessment of recent developments and the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We would like to reaffirm our full and continued support for him and his office, as well as for his efforts to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement and to engage Bosnia and Herzegovina in its reforms towards joining the European Union.

At the same time, let me warmly welcome Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, the new Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We thank him for his statement and for the special emphasis he has placed on the European aspirations of his country — aspirations that are shared by all the inhabitants of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Let me add on a more personal note that it is has been and is good to sit next to Bosnia and Herzegovina at this table as a neighbour, just as we are neighbours in Europe. Every Austrian knows that if one takes a ruler and places it on the map, the distance between Vienna and Sarajevo is shorter than the distance between Vienna and the western border of Austria.

Against this background, we also congratulate the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the recent fulfilment of the requirements for visa liberalization, which was confirmed by the Council of the European

Union on Monday. Austria very much welcomes this opportunity for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an important step forward that will bring the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union closer together. More frequent and flexible visits will also lead to the intensification of business contacts. This decision by the Council of the European Union clearly demonstrates that where there is political will, necessary reforms can be implemented effectively. We hope that this spirit of reform will also be taken on by the new Governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the same time, in line with the assessment of the High Representative and the recent progress report by the European Commission, we regret that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made limited progress in many areas of reform. The Constitution needs to be brought in line with international and European standards, including with rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.

Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to increase the functionality and effectiveness of its State institutions and to continue to cooperate with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, although we have taken note of the overall positive evaluation by Mr. Brammertz in this regard. Failure to implement the conditions on immovable military property has also delayed the implementation of the NATO Membership Action Plan.

As an example of the capability of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are encouraged by the professional handling of general elections by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the assessment that the elections were generally held in line with international standards. At the same time, we hope that the Constitution will be adjusted and that future elections will be open to all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in line with the European Convention for Human Rights and its Protocol No. 12.

We call on all political parties to end the use of divisive and nationalistic rhetoric. Here, I have to say, we specifically share the concerns expressed by the High Representative. Instead, a functional and effective State-level Government needs to be formed urgently to tackle the many outstanding reform issues. The politicians of Bosnia and Herzegovina will, we hope, work together to make further progress on the country's path towards the European Union and to fulfil the 5+2 criteria set forth by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

In October, the European Union Foreign Affairs Council again confirmed the readiness of the European Union to continue the European Union Force Althea with an executive military role beyond 2010 under a renewed United Nations mandate, and we look forward to next week's adoption of the resolution extending the authorization. The operation has started to provide non-executive capacity-building and training support, thus contributing to strengthened local ownership and capacity. Austria will continue its commitment as a troop contributor to the operation.

With a mandate extended until the end of 2011, the European Union Police Mission has focused specifically on fighting organized crime and corruption as part of an overall effort to entrench the rule of law in the country. The recent high-level visits by the President of the European Council, Mr. Van Rompuy, and Commissioner Füle underline the unequivocal commitment of the European Union to the European perspective for Bosnia and Herzegovina and the European Union's preparedness to assume the leading role in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the future. Members of the Council know how strongly my own country is committed to these aspirations and goals.

The Treaty of Lisbon has given the European Union more effective policy tools from which Bosnia and Herzegovina will also benefit, for example in the form of a strengthened European Union presence in the country.

Fifteen years after the signature of the Dayton and Paris Peace Agreements, Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens deserve a qualitative step forward for their country on the path towards European integration. We encourage the political leaders of the country to put Bosnia and Herzegovina firmly on the way towards the European Union and, in doing so, they can count on our support.

Mrs. DiCarlo (United States of America): Let me begin by welcoming His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thanking him for his comments. Let me also welcome High Representative Inzko back to the Council and thank him for his comprehensive briefing and service in support of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Fifteen years ago this month, a Peace Agreement was initialled in Dayton, Ohio, that helped end a terrible war and established a framework for a lasting peace. The United States made a commitment back then to help Bosnia and Herzegovina achieve peace and prosperity. We stand by that commitment today.

We are optimistic that Bosnia and Herzegovina can develop into a strong, stable democracy that respects the interests of all its citizens. The Bosnian people have made enormous strides in the past 15 years. Still, as the High Representative has indicated, much more work needs to be done for the country to fully realize its Euro-Atlantic future.

To move ahead with the closure of the Office of the High Representative, the objectives set by the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board on State and defence property issues must be met, together with the rest of the 5+2 conditions. The defence property issue also prevents Bosnia and Herzegovina from reaping the benefits of its NATO Membership Action Plan.

Constitutional reforms are also urgently needed to address basic human rights concerns, make Government more responsive to its people, and help meet the requirements for Euro-Atlantic integration. These decisions cannot be imposed from the outside, but the United States will remain engaged and we will help however we can.

Let me make three points in addressing the High Representative's report (see S/2010/575, annex). First, the United States welcomes Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent achievements. International observers consider the 3 October general elections generally free and fair. We look forward to the formation of Governments that can make progress on the pressing reform agenda. We also welcome Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards meeting the conditions for European Union (EU) visa liberalization, which will spur economic development and open the door to greater regional integration. The United States further appreciates Bosnia and Herzegovina's assumption of significantly increased responsibilities in the international community, including its service on the Security Council and its important contributions to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

Secondly, we share High Representative Inzko's concerns about what he describes as a deteriorating political climate. Election campaigning is no excuse for provocative and divisive political rhetoric. Leaders need to work together across ethnic and party lines. The United States is concerned about the expressions of public support by some politicians for war criminals indicted or convicted by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. We also condemn denials of the Srebrenica genocide, which are simply indefensible. Such attitudes undermine respect for the rule of law, impede reconciliation and hinder inter-ethnic cooperation. We expect Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet all of its obligations towards the Tribunal, and we expect it to take seriously its commitment to implementing its domestic war crimes strategy.

Thirdly, let me affirm United States support for the Office of the High Representative and the use of executive powers when necessary. Numerous Security Council resolutions have affirmed the High Representative's Bonn powers and affirmative responsibility to exercise them to ensure peace, stability and compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement. All parties are required to respect and implement the High Representative's decisions.

Following the formation of Governments, we expect Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders to make decisive progress on the outstanding elements of the 5+2 agenda for transition from the Office of the High Representative to an EU Special Representative. We look forward to constitutional and other reforms necessary for the country to present a credible application for EU candidacy.

We also note that the EU's presence — the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR) — continues to contribute to a safe and secure environment. It should be maintained. We support renewal of the EUFOR mandate, which the Council is currently discussing, and the continuation of a credible EU military presence.

The United States remains fully committed to the framework established by the Dayton Agreement. We look forward to continued reforms as the country's citizens and elected leaders assume full responsibility for their future, eventually leading to Bosnia and Herzegovina's full membership in the European Union and NATO.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I, too, extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and thank him for his important statement. I also thank

High Representative Valentin Inzko for his informative briefing and the report (see S/2010/575, annex) before us.

Brazil commends Bosnia and Herzegovina for having held free, fair and credible general elections last month. The vote should contribute to the consolidation of democracy and help to strengthen key political institutions. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also to be commended for the calm that continues to prevail in the country. Brazil acknowledges the role of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina in contributing to a safe and secure environment in the country. We fully support renewal of the Security Council's authorization for the Force.

Also positive is the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina continues to develop its relations with its neighbours. The completion of conditions for visa liberalization with the European Union is also a positive step on the path towards regional integration.

My delegation reiterates its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We support all efforts to strengthen the State at the national level and, at the same time, to preserve the rights and prerogatives of all communal entities. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a stable, prosperous and united country hinges on strict respect for the pertinent international and domestic legal provisions on the division of powers among the different levels of Government.

We are therefore concerned by statements and measures of the entities that question the territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Challenges to the Dayton Peace Agreement and its institutional arrangements, as well as divisive rhetoric, should be avoided. In this regard, we call on all actors to respect the authority of and cooperate with the High Representative. It is collaboration between and among entities and between the entities and the State that will lead to the closure of the Office of the High Representative and the transition to a reinforced European Union presence.

The international community should maintain its active support for Bosnia and Herzegovina in its pursuit for political stability and socio-economic development. There is no future for a divided Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that all concerned can come to this conclusion, set aside differences and work together. We are convinced that the Bosnian people, with the support of this Council, can and will succeed in consolidating a fully functional and self-sustaining State.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): We welcome the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Radmanović, and thank him for his statement. We thank Mr. Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina and European Union Special Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his briefing.

We commend the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina for its important contribution to the stability of the country. We also commend the High Representative for his efforts in facilitating the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. It is important that all leaders in the country continue to commit themselves to dialogue and peaceful coexistence.

We are concerned by actions questioning the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina's State institutions, as well as the continued challenges to the authority of the High Representative and the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council. It is important that all parties, including neighbours of Bosnia and Herzegovina, uphold their commitments in the spirit of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence, as enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We call on the authorities of the Republika Srpska to refrain from rhetoric and actions that challenge the sovereignty and constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina has continued to play an important role in providing the reassurance needed by the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We salute the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, for contributing a safe and secure environment. It is important, however, that every effort be made to support the national security forces so that they can assume their full responsibilities.

We welcome the progress that has been achieved in the country in the area of the entrenchment of the rule of law, particularly in terms of police reform and coordinating the policing aspects of combating major and organized crime.

We are concerned that the situation of refugees and displaced persons remains unresolved. This is a potentially destabilizing matter if not addressed in a holistic way. We therefore call on the authorities to ensure the implementation of the aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in dealing with refugees.

We commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for the progress made in economic development, despite the challenges brought about by the global financial and economic crisis. We call upon the international partners to support the country in its efforts to address these challenges.

Finally, we once again commend the High Representative and his staff for their good work.

Mr. Sumi (Japan): At the outset, I would like to extend a warm welcome to the Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović. I would also like to thank High Representative Valentin Inzko for his comprehensive briefing. I commend the devoted efforts that he and his staff have exerted with sincerity and great dedication to address the very complex and sensitive issues on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I welcome the fact that the general elections held in early October were conducted peacefully and successfully overall. In the light of the large number of issues that the country must address, we look forward to the expeditious establishment of the Council of Ministers and the early stabilization of the political situation. In the post-election context, there are at least two aspects that we find to be positive. The first is that the Bosniaks are motivated to reconcile with Serbia, as demonstrated by the apologies expressed by Mr. Izetbegović, a Bosniak member of the Presidency. This development is quite significant for the peace and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire West Balkan region.

The second point is that there is strong momentum for cooperation among the members of the Presidency. Their constructive collaboration will show other institutions in the country that the accumulation of cooperation can actually produce improvements in the country as a whole. We cannot be overly optimistic, however, as there remain large gaps among the positions of the various parties and ethnic groups.

We are particularly concerned about some acts that have the potential to destabilize the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as indicated in the report of the High Representative (see S/2010/575, annex). The State property law adopted by the Republika Srpska is a flagrant challenge to the authority of the Office of the High Representative. We note with regret that this law makes the possible achievement of the 5+2 agenda difficult.

Japan has consistently supported the policy of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding Euro-Atlantic integration. In that connection, we welcome the decision by the European Union (EU) Justice and Home Affairs Council to grant the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina a visa exemption to European Union countries. This could increase the incentive and momentum among the Bosnian people towards realizing European integration. We also hope that the achievement of the 5+2 objectives will enable the transition from the Office of the High Representative to the EU Special Representative at the earliest possible date.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to require an active role on the part of the High Representative until the transition to the EU Special Representative takes place. Japan highly values the activities of Mr. Inzko in bringing calm and reassurance to the situation, and continues to support him fully. We would like once again to reiterate that the High Representative must maintain full authority to fulfil his mission until his mandate comes to an end.

Finally, I would like to express Japan's appreciation for the role that the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina is playing in that region, and we support the renewal of its mandate now under discussion in the Security Council.

Mr. Issoze-Ngondet (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to welcome the presence of His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank him for his important statement. I also thank Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for introducing his report (see S/2010/575, annex). We share his views and support his efforts for a strong and stable Bosnia and Herzegovina, at home in Europe and in the world at large.

The periodic review by the Security Council of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a crucial opportunity to take stock of developments in the political and security situation in the country and the region. The report that has been presented to us highlights several areas of progress, which Gabon welcomes.

First of all, on the political front, general elections were held on 3 October. The successful holding of the elections attests to the political maturity of all parties involved and to their willingness to build the country on a foundation of peace. The elections should encourage all parties to move forward by rejecting the ethnic rhetoric that has long undermined the country's political and social life. I urge the Bosnians to continue to base the country's progress towards increased peace and stability on the virtues of dialogue and tolerance.

The talks under way aimed at creating a Government based on a broad consensus represents, in my view, another major step forward in the process of establishing the institutional mechanisms that are crucial to political stability, economic and social development and the strengthening of the country.

We also welcome the decision taken by the European Union on 8 November to lift the visa requirement for Albanians and Bosnians in the Schengen area countries. This is a strong political signal that demonstrates European Union commitment to the peace process in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to that country's progressive integration into the European community.

These positive developments lead me to once again urge the various political stakeholders to accelerate their implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Gabon believes that it would be to their benefit to strengthen their cooperation with the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR), NATO and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. We must also continue to support the parties in their efforts to achieve the five objectives and two conditions set out by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, which are essential to the effective transition from the Office of the High Representative to that of the European Union Special Representative.

On the security front, Gabon welcomes the fully stable security conditions throughout the country. In that regard, my delegation commends the central role of EUFOR to that end, in cooperation with the Armed Forces of Bosnian and Herzegovina. I am of the view that reform of the defence sector, which NATO fully supports, will help strengthen security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For Gabon, the presence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in this body is proof of the consideration and respect it enjoys in the international community, but also and above all, of its commitment to finding peace and prosperity once again within and with Europe. My country remains hopeful that the peace process under way will be further strengthened by the momentum towards unity, of which the ongoing consultation and dialogue will be the main vectors. Those two tools will open the path to a peaceful and bright future for that country, which has long suffered internal tensions.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): I, too, would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Council and to thank him for his statement. I also thank the High Representative, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his views on the developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina since his last report (see S/2010/235, annex).

We are pleased with the positive developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina since the Council's last meeting on this item (see S/PV.6319). In particular, we note the successful conclusion of the sixth national election last month. We congratulate the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina on their commitment to democracy, as demonstrated by their participation in the elections. We welcome the decision to allow visa-free travel to all Bosnians. Equally, we welcome the European Union's improved relations with the country's neighbours.

We recall with nostalgia the high hopes that attended the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement 15 years ago. As we welcome the achievements of the past 11 years, we also share the Secretary-General's concern over the limited progress made in implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement and in meeting the outstanding requirements set by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council

for the transition from the Office of the High Representative to a European Union presence.

In the same vein, we observe that the reported increase in provocative and nationalistic rhetoric further undermines efforts towards achieving a stable and peaceful country, fully integrated into Euro-Atlantic structures. We encourage political leaders to commit to the necessary reforms and to ensure the completion of the five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative. They should also refrain from nationalistic and anti-Dayton rhetoric, surmount their differences and commit to dialogue.

We welcome the contributions of the regional and international partners in support of Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress towards Euro-Atlantic integration. We encourage it not to relent in its efforts to ensure that all outstanding issues pertaining to the country's integration into the European Union are resolved speedily. We appreciate the role of the European Union's peacekeeping, in collaboration with the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to ensure a safe and secure environment in the country.

We commend the High Representative for his tireless efforts to promote the entry of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the European Union and to facilitate the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. We look forward to a more collaborative effort between the Office of the High Representative, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the Government in ensuring the full implementation of annex 7 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to close the chapter of displacement in Bosnia and Herzegovina by 2014.

It is a positive development that the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina is showing signs of improvement. Economic growth in the country is essential to supporting efforts to sustain peace and stability. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina will need to continue the necessary reforms and to work assiduously with its international partners to improve the economy. We call on the international community to continue to support the Government in its efforts to foster economic progress, thereby improving the lives of the average Bosnian.

Let me conclude by stating that Nigeria, along with Council members, will remain focused in efforts to support the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve a prosperous and democratic country. We urge all concerned to display more maturity, as we believe that the Bosnian people can confront the current challenges with the necessary political will.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

I thank the High Representative for his very clear report (see S/2010/575, annex) and express the United Kingdom's strong support for his ongoing work in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also thank His Excellency Mr. Radmanović for attending this meeting so soon after his swearing-in for a second term on the Presidency, and congratulate him on his re-election.

The United Kingdom shares Mr. Inzko's concerns about the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over the past six months, there has been a worrying lack of progress on key reforms and an escalation of divisive anti-Dayton rhetoric and actions against Bosnia and Herzegovina's State-level institutions. In that context, it is important to obtain the means to deal with the challenges to Dayton.

We want to see transition from the Office of the High Representative to the European Union Special Representative, but only on the basis of the full completion of the 5+2 conditionality. The level of rhetoric highlighted in the report is of particular concern. It is important that the Security Council make very clear its unequivocal commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's territorial integrity, as enshrined in the Dayton Agreement.

We fully agree with the High Representative's call for the continuing mandate of the European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUFOR). In the context of the continued political tensions, EUFOR fulfils an essential role underpinning stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We welcome the fact that the October elections were conducted, as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has said, generally in line with international standards. The newly elected leaders now need quickly to form new Governments at the federal and State levels, with the reform agenda at the heart of their programmes.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Vilović (Croatia): At the outset, allow me to extend my welcome to His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are also pleased to see again among us His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative and Special Representative of the European Union, and thank him for his briefing. The report (see S/2010/575, annex) that he presented accurately reflects recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we share the concerns that he expressed in his report and his briefing. I would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm Croatia's full and continued support for him and his Office.

Bearing in mind the existing shortcomings in addressing the remaining objectives and conditions, as well as the continuing challenges to the very foundations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as established by the Dayton Peace Agreement — the fifteenth anniversary of which we will mark shortly — we agree with the assessment that it would be premature to begin the closure of the Office of the High Representative this year.

I would like to make three brief points.

First, we welcome the fact that the October elections were free, fair and generally organized in accordance with democratic principles and international standards. Croatia believes that elected individuals and political parties should enter into constructive dialogue on the formation of new Governments at all levels so as to continue, as soon as possible, with the process of reforms needed for Euro-Atlantic integration.

Negotiations on constitutional reform should be continued in the post-electoral period. Croatia reiterates its call to political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina to find strength and reach compromise on key issues. Assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina in reaching sustainable stability and functionality is one of our regional priorities. However, there will be no progress without consensus, which has to originate from within and enjoy the support of regional actors and the international community.

For Croatia, the territorial integrity, sovereignty and equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina's three constitutive peoples are the basic preconditions for the country's stability and sustainability. Croatia therefore advocates for constitutional amendments that provide full equality for all constitutive peoples and citizens throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Secondly, Croatia's strategic interest is the stability, security and progress of South-East Europe. We are pleased that the report recognized the improved political environment in relations between countries in the region. I would like to reiterate that Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enjoy a close and friendly relationship in many aspects. The high-level visits of both President Josipović and Prime Minister Kosor represent strong encouragement to Bosnia and Herzegovina and to Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including as regards their viable return to their country, primarily to Republika Srpska.

In the same vein, Croatia strongly supports the clear and unambiguous European and Euro-Atlantic perspective of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We firmly support all the countries of the region in their reforms. We have invested a lot of effort in offering them our assistance and experience on the European Union and NATO integration path. We believe that membership in the European Union represents the most suitable framework for the overall development of all countries of South-East Europe.

Therefore, we are particularly pleased with the recent decision of the Council of the European Union on the abolition of the visa requirement for citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina holding biometric passports. This is a welcome step that not only brings real benefits to the people, but may also reverse the trend of Bosnia and Herzegovina lagging behind other countries in the region in its rapprochement to the European Union.

On the other hand, we regret that the invitation extended by NATO to Bosnia and Herzegovina to join its membership action plan, a step that Croatia strongly and actively supported, has not been followed by the start of its annual national programme. We call on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take all the necessary measures in order to fulfil requirements regarding State property.

Thirdly, as we have stated on many occasions, there cannot be a Bosnia and Herzegovina without Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Their political and cultural survival is vital for the continued existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as these two elements are closely intertwined. Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina are the smallest and most vulnerable group. Their voice

should be considered on the basis of equality, both ethnic and civic, as guaranteed in the Constitution and as stemming from the history of the country. Croats should have the equal right to participate in the decision-making process and should not be out-voted, especially at the level of the Federation.

Finally, the fight against impunity for war crimes is crucial for the normalization of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The mandate of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia should not be declared complete without bringing to justice the two remaining fugitives, Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić, who were indicted for the most atrocious crimes committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia. It is also important that national courts fulfil their lasting responsibility and address their war crime cases.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Starčević (Serbia): Let me, first of all, warmly welcome His Excellency Mr. Nebojša Radmanović, Chairman of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As on all previous occasions, the delegation of Serbia has read the report on implementation of the Peace Agreement (see S/2010/575) that has been presented. We have also listened with keen interest to the views expressed in the Council today. Serbia is fully committed to continuing, in cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina and other regional stakeholders, activities aimed at bringing about full reconciliation and lasting stability in the region. We are convinced that the joint efforts and cooperation of all the countries in the region, along with the intensification of the efforts of the international community, will contribute to the strengthening of Bosnia and Herzegovina as one country.

Serbia is making great efforts to significantly advance its relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, our next-door neighbour and a friendly country. It is precisely the continued development and promotion of relations among States of the Western Balkans that will bring us to the achievement of our common goal, namely, integration into the European Union (EU).

We welcome democratic processes. In that spirit, we also welcome the recently held elections, which expressed the will of the people. We see them as an important step forward in ensuring a peaceful and prosperous future for all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in creating conditions for further advancement towards the European Union.

In order to bring greater stability to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country needs some encouragement from the Union, as EU integration is a common denominator of the aspirations of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Encouragement and concrete support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's integration into the European Union would go a long way in bringing about further stability to the country. Serbia has been a staunch advocate of Bosnia and Herzegovina's inclusion into the EU's liberalization of the visa regime. We are very happy that this decision has finally been adopted. That is exactly the much-needed and strategically important signal of a European future for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a signatory party and a guarantor of the implementation of the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in accordance with resolution 1031 (1995), Serbia remains strongly committed to the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and consistently respects its territorial integrity and sovereignty. We support the initiation of reform processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are of the opinion that the closure of the Office of the High Representative and the termination of the so-called Bonn powers would contribute to finding a solution in that regard.

We call for the achievement of a sustainable solution in the spirit of European values, with the agreement of the representatives of the two entities and the consensus of the three constituent peoples. Serbia is encouraging the participants in that process to do all that is needed to bring about such an agreement.

Our constructive approach to the search for a solution is based not only on our support for the integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also on our deep conviction that only dialogue and agreement can bring about a solution that can be sustained in the future. Every solution in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be followed by peace and stability and should be reached by agreements that do not bring into question the integrity of the country, for it is only a

stable and prosperous region that can become a part of the European family of nations.

Based on the Special Parallel Relationship Agreement between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Republika Srpska, Serbia views the development of its relations with the Republika Srpska in the context of its efforts to intensify overall relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Guided by its commitment to a complete normalization and substantively new relations, my country is devoted to the further improvement of relations and has taken important steps towards comprehensive regional reconciliation. The declaration on Srebrenica of the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia demonstrates clearly Serbia's support for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also its readiness to confront the past and assume political responsibility for the future and the well-being of the region. The Istanbul declaration and the regular trilateral meetings of the Foreign Ministers of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Turkey contribute and lend impetus to the further promotion of good-neighbourly relations.

We are fully aware that regional and economic cooperation provide a special impulse to the lasting stabilization of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region of South-East Europe/Western Balkans. The successful cooperation between Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina within the framework of numerous international and regional initiatives — such as the Process of Cooperation in South-East Europe, the Central European Free Trade Agreement, the Regional Cooperation Council, the Central European Initiative, the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and others — is a good example of the importance that we attach to the promotion of regional cooperation and a common European future. We are committed to furthering ever better and more extensive regional cooperation and integration so that we can find common answers to regional challenges and cooperate in our efforts to join the European Union.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I thank Mr. Radmanović and Mr. Inzko for their participation in today's meeting.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.